

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method for determining a voting result for a voting issue, comprising:

providing notification of a voting website to a plurality of eligible voters, wherein

5 the notification is provided via an email message sent to each eligible voter of the plurality of eligible voters, wherein the notification provides the plurality of eligible voters with access to the voting website;

for each eligible voter of the plurality of eligible voters that accesses the voting  
10 website, validating identity of the eligible voter to produce a validated voter;

receiving voting information from validated voters; and

15 compiling the voting information from the validated voters to produce the voting result.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the email message provided to each eligible voter includes a hyperlink to the voting website.

20 3. The method of claim 1, wherein providing notification further comprises, for each eligible voter:

retrieving an email address for the eligible voter from a voter database; and

25 generating the email message sent to the eligible voter using the email address retrieved.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprises providing a plurality of hyperlinks on the voting website, wherein a first hyperlink of the plurality of hyperlinks directs an

eligible voter to a voting page and a second hyperlink of the plurality of hyperlinks directs the user to documentation related to the voting issue.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein providing the plurality of eligible voters with  
5 access to the voting website further comprises:

sending a consent email message to each potential voter of a plurality of potential voters, wherein the consent email message includes a hyperlink to a consent website;

10 receiving consent information corresponding to at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters based on responses provided by the at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters via the consent website; and

15 determining the plurality of eligible voters from the at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters based on the consent information.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein consent information includes consent to vote electronically and consent to receive documentation electronically, wherein at least one  
20 hyperlink is provided on the voting website, wherein a first hyperlink directs an eligible voter to a voting page when the eligible voter has consented to vote electronically, and a second hyperlink directs the eligible voter to documentation related to the voting issue when the eligible voter has consented to receive documentation electronically.

25 7. The method of claim 1, wherein validating identity of the eligible voter to produce a validated voter further comprises:

receiving a user identity from the eligible voter;

30 receiving a password from the eligible voter;

comparing the password with a stored password corresponding to the user identity to produce a comparison result, wherein when the comparison result is favorable, the eligible voter is validated to produce a validated voter.

5     8.     The method of claim 7, wherein receiving the user identity and the password is performed using a secure data communication protocol.

9.     The method of claim 1, wherein validating identity of the eligible voter to produce a validated voter further comprises

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detecting an electronic certificate stored on a host device associated with the eligible voter; and

15     comparing the electronic certificate with a validation certificate stored in a validation database to produce a comparison result, wherein when the comparison result is favorable, the eligible voter is validated to produce a validated voter.

10.    The method of claim 1, wherein compiling the voting information further comprises storing the voting information in a database.

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11.    The method of claim 10, wherein compiling the voting information further comprises generating at least one transfer agent email message, wherein the at least one transfer agent email message includes voting information corresponding to at least one eligible voter; and

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sending the at least one transfer agent email message to a transfer agent, wherein the transfer agent compiles the voting information in the at least one transfer agent email message to produce the voting result.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the voting information in the at least one transfer agent email message is encrypted prior to sending the at least one transfer agent email message to the transfer agent.

5 13. The method of claim 11, wherein compiling the voting information further comprises generating and sending a transfer agent email message for each set of voting information received during a predetermined voting time period; and

10 sending a final email message at the close of the predetermined voting time period, wherein the final email message includes default voting information corresponding to eligible voters that failed to vote using the voting website.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein compiling the voting information further comprises transferring contents of the database to the transfer agent.

15 15. The method of claim 13, wherein email messages to the plurality of eligible voters are delivered via an internal network, wherein website access to the eligible voters is provided via the internal network, and wherein email messages to the transfer agent are delivered via an external network.

20 16. The method of claim 1 wherein providing the plurality of eligible voters with access to the voting website further comprises:

25 providing a consent notification to a potential voter of a plurality of potential voters, wherein the consent notification notifies the potential voter of the consent website;

30 receiving consent information corresponding to at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters based on responses provided by the at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters via the consent website; and

determining the plurality of eligible voters from the at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters based on the consent information.

- 5    17.    The method of claim 16, wherein consent information includes consent to vote electronically and consent to receive documentation electronically, wherein at least one hyperlink is provided on the voting website, wherein a first hyperlink directs an eligible voter to a voting page when the eligible voter has consented to vote electronically, and a second hyperlink directs the eligible voter to documentation related to the voting issue
- 10   when the eligible voter has consented to receive documentation electronically.

18. A voting management processor, comprising:

a processing module; and

memory operably coupled to the processing module, wherein the memory stores operating instructions that, when executed by the processing module, cause the processing module to perform functions that include:

providing notification of a voting website to a plurality of eligible voters, wherein the notification is provided via an email message sent to each eligible voter of the plurality of eligible voters, wherein the notification provides the plurality of eligible voters with access to the voting website;

for each eligible voter of the plurality of eligible voters that accesses the voting website, validating identity of the eligible voter to produce a validated voter;

receiving voting information from validated voters; and

compiling the voting information from the validated voters to produce the voting result.

19. The voting management processor of claim 18, wherein the email message provided to each eligible voter includes a hyperlink to the voting website.

20. The voting management processor of claim 18, wherein providing notification further comprises, for each eligible voter:

retrieving an email address for the eligible voter from a voter database; and

generating the email message sent to the eligible voter using the email address retrieved.

21. The voting management processor of claim 20, wherein the voter database is  
5 stored in the memory.

22. The voting management processor of claim 20, wherein the voter database is accessed by the voting management processor over a network.

10 23. The voting management processor of claim 20, wherein the memory stores additional instructions such that the functions performed by the processing module include providing a plurality of hyperlinks on the voting website, wherein a first  
15 hyperlink of the plurality of hyperlinks directs an eligible voter to a voting page and a second hyperlink of the plurality of hyperlinks directs the user to documentation related to the voting issue.

24. The voting management processor of claim 18, wherein providing the plurality of eligible voters with access to the voting website further comprises:

20 sending a consent email message to each potential voter of a plurality of potential voters, wherein the consent email message includes a hyperlink to a consent website;

receiving consent information corresponding to at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters based on responses provided by the at least a portion of the plurality of  
25 potential voters via the consent website; and

determining the plurality of eligible voters from the at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters based on the consent information.

25. The voting management processor of claim 24, wherein consent information includes consent to vote electronically and consent to receive documentation electronically, wherein at least one hyperlink is provided on the voting website, wherein a first hyperlink directs an eligible voter to a voting page when the eligible voter has consented to vote electronically, and a second hyperlink directs the eligible voter to documentation related to the voting issue when the eligible voter has consented to receive documentation electronically.

26. The voting management processor of claim 18, wherein validating identity of the eligible voter to produce a validated voter further comprises:

receiving a user identity from the eligible voter;

receiving a password from the eligible voter;

comparing the password with a stored password corresponding to the user identity to produce a comparison result, wherein when the comparison result is favorable, the eligible voter is validated to produce a validated voter.

27. The voting management processor of claim 18, wherein validating identity of the eligible voter to produce a validated voter further comprises

detecting an electronic certificate stored on a host device associated with the eligible voter; and

comparing the electronic certificate with a validation certificate stored in a validation database to produce a comparison result, wherein when the comparison result is favorable, the eligible voter is validated to produce a validated voter.

28. The voting management processor of claim 18, wherein compiling the voting information further comprises storing the voting information in the memory.

29. The voting management processor of claim 28, wherein compiling the voting information further comprises generating at least one transfer agent email message, wherein the at least one transfer agent email message includes voting information

5 corresponding to at least one eligible voter; and

sending the at least one transfer agent email message to a transfer agent, wherein the transfer agent compiles the voting information in the at least one transfer agent email message to produce the voting result.

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30. The voting management processor of claim 29, wherein the voting information in the at least one transfer agent email message is encrypted prior to sending the at least one transfer agent email to the transfer agent.

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31. The voting management processor of claim 29, wherein compiling the voting information further comprises generating and sending a transfer agent email message for each set of voting information received during a predetermined voting time period; and

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sending a final email message at the close of the predetermined voting time period, wherein the final email message includes default voting information corresponding to eligible voters that failed to vote using the voting website.

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32. The voting management processor of claim 31, wherein compiling the voting information further comprises transferring contents of the database to the transfer agent.

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33. The voting management processor of claim 18, wherein providing the plurality of eligible voters with access to the voting website further comprises:

providing a consent notification to a potential voter of a plurality of potential voters, wherein the consent notification notifies the potential voter of the consent website;

receiving consent information corresponding to at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters based on responses provided by the at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters via the consent website; and

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determining the plurality of eligible voters from the at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters based on the consent information.

34. The voting management processor of claim 33, wherein consent information  
10 includes consent to vote electronically and consent to receive documentation electronically, wherein at least one hyperlink is provided on the voting website, wherein a first hyperlink directs an eligible voter to a voting page when the eligible voter has consented to vote electronically, and a second hyperlink directs the eligible voter to documentation related to the voting issue when the eligible voter has consented to receive  
15 documentation electronically.

35. A voting system, comprising:

a first network;

5 a voting server operably coupled to the first network; and

a plurality of clients operably coupled to the first network, wherein each of the plurality of clients provides access to the voting server to a portion of a plurality of potential voters,

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wherein the voting server performs functions that include:

receiving consent information from at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters;

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determining a plurality of eligible voters based on the at least a portion of the plurality of potential voters from which consent information was received;

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sending voting notification email messages to the plurality of eligible voters, wherein the voting notification email messages provide access to a voting website managed by the voting server;

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for each eligible voter of the plurality of eligible voters that accesses the voting website, validating the eligible voter to produce a validated voter;

receiving voting information from at least a portion of the validated voters; and

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compiling the voting information from the at least a portion of the validated voters to produce a voting result.

36. The voting system of claim 35 wherein the functions performed by the voting server further include:

sending consent email messages to the plurality of potential voters.

5 37. The voting system of claim 35 further comprises:

a second network operably coupled to at least one of the first network and the voting server; and

10 a transfer agent operably coupled to the second network, wherein the voting server compiles the voting information such that compiling includes:

generating at least one transfer agent email message, wherein the at least one transfer agent email message includes voting information corresponding to at  
15 least one eligible voter; and

20 sending the at least one transfer agent email message to the transfer agent via the second network, wherein the transfer agent compiles the voting information in the at least one transfer agent email message to produce the voting result.

25 38. The voting system of claim 37, wherein the first network is a secure internal network and wherein the second network is an external network, wherein the voting information included in the at least one transfer agent email message is encrypted prior to being sent to the transfer agent.

30 39. The voting system of claim 37 further comprises a broker server operably coupled to the second network, wherein the broker server collects broker client voting information from a plurality of broker clients, wherein the broker server forwards the broker client voting information to the transfer agent via the second network, wherein the transfer

agent compiles the voting information in the at least one transfer agent email message with the broker client voting information to produce the voting result.